



# Supporting Openness During the Adoption Transition and Probation Period

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# For this presentation we are assuming...

- ▶ There is already a plan for openness, whether by order or agreement
- ▶ We will be focusing on the role of the adoption worker
- ▶ We will be focusing on the transition (pre-placement) period and the adoption probation period. This may also include foster with a view situations.

# This is what we will cover

- ▶ What are the things the adoption worker needs to understand prior to even beginning an adoption transition between the selected family and child
- ▶ Things to consider during an adoption transition and the implications for openness
- ▶ Using the adoption probation period to support the success of the openness plans.



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# Pre-Transition Planning

- ▶ What does an adoption worker need to consider?
- ▶ Always keep child in the center of all planning.
- ▶ Recognize that every case is unique – it's important to really know the child and the significance to the child of his or her different relationships
- ▶ Get personally acquainted with birth family members
- ▶ Use these connections to give and get information

# Transition Phase

- ▶ The day-to-day realities set in for AP and child
- ▶ Time of intense activities – physically and emotionally = total disruption for the child and family
- ▶ Massive move for child – everything changing
- ▶ Bonds between AP and child are fragile, evolving
- ▶ AP in emotional limbo – not yet the parents – high demands of them – little control
- ▶ This stage needs some space to establish some sense of equilibrium

# Adoption Probation

This is a time to “practice” the Openness activities

Support families to be successful:

- ▶ Anticipate there will be challenges
- ▶ Consider opportunities to assist
- ▶ Prepare adoptive family and child for what to expect
- ▶ Address issues that arise early – take a step back;
- ▶ Bring adults together

# Roles of Adoption Worker

- ▶ Become the point of contact for a birth family
- ▶ Educator for adoption information. Even the child needs to understand how adoption is different
- ▶ Being the buffer for adoptive family, particularly in the early phases
- ▶ Facilitator, mentor, and coach, as needed.



# Key Messages

- ▶ Adoption workers are uniquely placed to be to support openness in relationships and to ultimately support the strength of an adoptive placement
- ▶ Relationships are built over time; use the adoption probation period to strengthen the adult relationships (birth and adoptive families) that will be the foundation for ongoing contact
- ▶ The adjustment period for a child and adoptive period can be lengthy, bumpy and intense. The ultimate goal is to give a child a permanency family that also includes preserving the child's significant connection to birth family



Thank-you

QUESTIONS?

COMMENTS?

STORIES OR SCENARIOS  
YOU HAVE DEALT  
WITH?